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Noise Compatible Planning Document
Progress Report
Task 1
March 23, 2007

Task 1: Review relevant noise-compatible planning documents (e.g., SD, MT, FHWA, other states).

Results: Headwaters reviewed the following documents:

- *Tools for Preventing Adverse Effects from Highway Noise: A State and Local Partnership Approach*, South Dakota Department of Transportation, Pierre, South Dakota, August 2006.
- Reiter, et al., *Traffic Noise in Montana: Community Awareness and Recommendations for a Rural State*, Montana Department of Transportation, Helena, Montana, August 2004.
- Documents on the Federal Highway Administration's web pages for Highway Traffic Noise and Noise Compatible Planning.

Headwaters identified questions about the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) role in noise compatible planning, which are presented below. We do not need the answers to these questions right away as we are focusing on what the local governments can do, but it would be helpful to have them answered when we work on Task 4, beginning April 9.

Questions:

- If we remember correctly, MDT is revising its traffic noise policy to replace the policy adopted in 2001 now. What is the timeline for this? If the policy is revised before we are done with this project, could we get a copy?
- Does/will MDT have standards for noise walls, berms, or barriers (e.g., size, design, materials, location, foundation, etc.)?
- Will MDT permit its right-of-way to be used for a noise barrier? Is this something that should be addressed case-by-case? (The South Dakota document says that South Dakota generally does not allow this and we're wondering what advice should be given.)
- The South Dakota booklet referenced above outlines a variety of roles for the South Dakota Department of Transportation to play in land use planning. We understand that MDT does not have the resources to provide the same level of technical assistance. We have identified various roles below and are wondering

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if MDT would be involved in any of these and in what way. Alternatively, is there a better way to summarize what role MDT would play or what assistance it might provide? Is there any assistance that MDT might provide that isn't described here?

- Technical assistance in the adaptation of the sample language in this document to local plans, subdivision regulations, and zoning ordinances.
- Providing 61dBA, 66dBA and 71dBA noise contours; if so, for which highways or projects? See below.
- Providing any other noise analyses. For example, MDT is required to provide estimates of future noise levels for new highways and certain highway improvement projects (Type I projects). What types of information does MDT provide that would be useful to a local government? Are we correct in assuming that this information would be provided when the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document is prepared?
- Providing traffic data for highway segments that MDT is responsible for (for use by local governments, developers, contractors, etc. in developing noise analyses).
- Response to technical assistance requests from local governments or local developers with regard to any of the information in the document that we are working on.
- Review and comment on proposed site plans for development along highway segments where highway noise is an issue, or will become an issue (e.g., proposed subdivisions, zoning variance requests, etc.)
- Review and comment on proposed noise barrier specifications in particular locations.
- Review and approval of noise barriers not approved by MDT.
- Inspection of noise barriers during and after construction for conformance with standards.
- Maintenance of noise barriers. See item 10 on page E-38 of the South Dakota document. Is there a reason to include any reference to a memorandum of understanding with MDT governing maintenance of noise barriers?
- Providing a list of qualified highway noise consultants to perform detailed noise analyses in connection with proposed noise sensitive developments.